

§ 233.9

(c) *Ruling on petition for expedited release in an administrative forfeiture action involving personal use quantities of a controlled substance.* (1) Upon receipt of a petition for expedited release filed pursuant to § 233.8(b), the Postal Inspection Service must determine first whether a final administrative determination of the case, without regard to the provisions of this section, can be made within 21 days of the seizure. If such a final administrative determination is made within 21 days, no further action need be taken under this section.

(2) If no such final administrative determination is made within 21 days of the seizure, the following procedure applies:

(i) The Postal Inspection Service, within 20 days after the receipt of the petition for expedited release, determines whether the petition filed by the owner has established the factors listed in § 233.8(b)(2); and

(ii) If the Postal Inspection Service determines that those factors have been established, it terminates the administrative proceedings and returns the property to the owner except where it is evidence of a violation of law; or

(iii) If the Postal Inspection Service determines that those factors have not been established, it proceeds with the administrative forfeiture.

(d) *Posting of substitute res.* (1) Where property is seized for administrative forfeiture involving controlled substances in personal use quantities, the owner may obtain release of the property by posting a substitute res with the Postal Service. The property will be released to the owner upon the payment of an amount equal to the appraised value of the property if it is not evidence of a violation of law or has design or other characteristics that particularly suit it for use in illegal activities. This payment must be in the form of a traveler's check, a money order, a cashier's check or an irrevocable letter of credit made payable to the Postal Service. A bond in the form of a cashier's check will be considered as paid once the check has been accepted for payment by the financial institution which issued the check.

(2) If a substitute res is posted and the property is administratively forfeited,

the Postal Inspection Service will forfeit the substitute res in lieu of the property.

[54 FR 47520, Nov. 15, 1989]

§ 233.9 Expedited release of conveyances being forfeited in a judicial forfeiture proceeding for a drug-related offense.

(a) *Petition for expedited release of conveyance.* Where a conveyance has been seized and is being forfeited in a judicial proceeding for a drug-related offense, the owner may petition the United States Attorney for an expedited release of the conveyance in accordance with the regulations of the Department of Justice (21 CFR part 1316).

(b) *Petition filed in timely manner.* A petition for expedited release must be filed in a timely manner in order to be considered by the United States Attorney. To be considered as filed in a timely manner, in accordance with 21 CFR part 1316, the petition must be received by the appropriate United States Attorney within 20 days from the date of the first publication of the notice of the action and arrest of the property, or within 30 days after filing of the claim, whichever occurs later.

(c) *Obtaining release of the property by filing a substitute res bond.* Where a conveyance is being forfeited in a judicial proceeding for a drug-related offense, the owner may obtain release of the property by filing a substitute res bond with the Postal Inspection Service. The conveyance will be released to the owner upon the payment of a bond in the amount of the appraised value of the conveyance if it is not evidence of a violation of law or has design or other characteristics that particularly suit it for use in illegal activities. This bond must be in the form of a traveler's check, a money order, a cashier's check or an irrevocable letter of credit made payable to the United States Postal Service. A bond in the form of a cashier's check will be considered as paid once the check has been accepted for payment by the financial institution which issued the check.

(d) *Forfeiture of the bond.* If a substitute res bond is filed and the conveyance is judicially forfeited, the court

United States Postal Service

§ 233.11

will forfeit the bond in lieu of the property.

[54 FR 47522, Nov. 15, 1989]

§ 233.10 Notice provisions.

(a) *Special notice provision.* At the time of seizure of property defined in § 233.8(b) for violations involving the possession of personal use quantities of a controlled substance, written notice will be provided to the possessor of the property regarding applicable statutes and Federal regulations including the procedures established for the filing of a petition for expedited release and for the posting of a substitute res bond.

(b) *Standard notice provision.* The standard notice to the owner as required by 19 U.S.C. 1607 will be made at the earliest practicable opportunity after determining ownership of the seized property and must include the legal and factual basis of the seizure.

[54 FR 47522, Nov. 15, 1989]

§ 233.11 Mail reasonably suspected of being dangerous to persons or property.

(a) *Screening of mail.* When the Chief Postal Inspector determines that there is a credible threat that certain mail may contain a bomb, explosives, or other material that would endanger life or property, including firearms which are not mailable under Section C024 of the Domestic Mail Manual, the Chief Postal Inspector may, without a search warrant or the sender's or addressee's consent, authorize the screening of such mail by any means capable of identifying explosives, nonmailable firearms, or other dangerous contents in the mails. The screening must be within the limits of this section and without opening mail that is sealed against inspection or revealing the contents of correspondence within mail that is sealed against inspection. The screening is conducted according to these requirements.

(1) Screening of mail authorized by paragraph (a) of this section must be limited to the least quantity of mail necessary to respond to the threat.

(2) Such screening must be done in a manner that does not avoidably delay the screened mail.

(3) The Chief Postal Inspector may authorize screening of mail by postal employees and by persons not employed by the Postal Service under such instruction that require compliance with this part and protect the security of the mail. No information obtained from such screening may be disclosed unless authorized by this part.

(4) Mail of insufficient weight to pose a hazard to air or surface transportation, or to contain firearms which are not mailable under Section C024 of the Domestic Mail Manual, and international transit mail must be excluded from such screening.

(5) After screening conducted under paragraph (a) of this section, mail that is reasonably suspected of posing an immediate and substantial danger to life or limb, or an immediate and substantial danger to property, may be treated by postal employees as provided in paragraph (b) of this section.

(6) After screening, mail sealed against inspection that presents doubts about whether its contents are hazardous, that cannot be resolved without opening, must be reported to the Postal Inspection Service. Such mail must be disposed of under instructions promptly furnished by the Inspection Service.

(b) *Threatening pieces of mail.* Mail, sealed or unsealed, reasonably suspected of posing an immediate danger to life or limb or an immediate and substantial danger to property may, without a search warrant, be detained, opened, removed from postal custody, and processed or treated, but only to the extent necessary to determine and eliminate the danger and only if a complete written and sworn statement of the detention, opening, removal, or treatment, and the circumstances that prompted it, signed by the person purporting to act under this section, is promptly forwarded to the Chief Postal Inspector.

(c) *Reports.* Any person purporting to act under this section who does not report his or her action to the Chief Postal Inspector under the requirements of this section, or whose action is determined after investigation not to have been authorized, is subject to